From: **Bob Sussman/DC/USEPA/US**
Sent: 10/23/2012 10:45:29 AM

To: James O'Hara/DC/USEPA/US@EPA
CC:
Subject: Methane Dimock Issues

Jim -- I've done some digging on the methane MCL issue you asked about a few days ago. Lisa F sent the enclosed Dimock Q&As. Here's what they say about methane:

Q: What about methane levels and potential risk of explosion?
A: There is no MCL for methane, and neither EPA nor PADEP nor ATSDR believes there is a health threat from ingestion of methane in the human body. With regard to safety concerns, EPA selected a screening level used by the federal Office of Surface Mining (OSM) of 28 parts per million (ppm) for dissolved methane in drinking water. Twenty-eight ppm is the maximum level of methane that can be dissolved in water before the methane leaves solution and enters the air as a gas. Methane is not explosive while in solution, and OSM reports that methane in water does not impair the odor, taste or color nor does it affect in any way the potability of the water. The potential for methane in air to create an explosive environment depends on a number of factors, such as: the concentration, the volume of the space and frequency of air exchanges in the space. Proper room ventilation will ensure that methane levels in indoor air do not present a safety hazard.

As part of our sampling efforts, when a well was found to have methane levels above 28 ppm, we notified the resident, the state, and the county emergency management agency. EPA found levels of methane at or above the 28 ppm level at a total of five of the 64 homes overall. Two of these wells were not connected to the residences at the time of the sample because the residents were receiving alternate water from Cabot. At a third home, the resident does not use the well which is located in the basement of the home but vented to the atmosphere. At these three homes as well as two other residences where the water was being used in the home the residents have been notified by EPA of our results and the residents indicated they were already aware that their water contained levels of methane. EPA also notified Pennsylvania DEP and the Susquehanna County EMA, and can work with local officials to provide recommendations to affected residents in the event that use of well water is resumed.

Q: If asked about PA's 7ppm level:
A: Pennsylvania does not have a drinking water standard for methane since it is not considered toxic in water. For safety reasons, they have established by regulation seven (7) ppm as a gas migration response value where Pennsylvania expects oil and gas well operators to notify the state, determine whether the methane source is from any nearby gas well and work with Pennsylvania to determine what measures may be appropriate to mitigate any threats.

I think this resolves the issue but am happy to talk further.

Robert M. Sussman
Senior Policy Counsel to the Administrator
Office of the Administrator
US Environmental Protection Agency
----- Forwarded by Bob Sussman/DC/USEPA/US on 10/23/2012 10:42 AM -----

From: Lisa Feldt/DC/USEPA/US
To: Bob Sussman/DC/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 10/23/2012 09:02 AM
Subject: Fw: Final Qs/As for Dimock

to follow up on our discussion on methane last week, here is the final q&A's that we did for dimock. The most complete methane response is on page 7 and 8. Pretty clear I think what are position is on this.

Lisa Feldt
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----- Forwarded by Lisa Feldt/DC/USEPA/US on 10/23/2012 09:00 AM -----

From: Ron Borsellino/R3/USEPA/US
To: "Lisa Feldt" <Feldt.Lisa@epamail.epa.gov>
Date: 10/18/2012 03:17 PM
Subject: Fw: Final Qs/As for Dimock

Lisa: here is the latest Qs/As for Dimock.

Sent by EPA Wireless E-Mail Services

----- Original Message -----
From: Dennis Carney
Sent: 10/18/2012 03:10 PM EDT
To: Ron Borsellino
Subject: Final Qs/As for Dimock
Ron, as requested..... den.